

Dialogue for meaning

Purpose

An oral technique to promote effective communication between participants to enhance meaning.

Process

- Participants sit in small circles facing each another.
- The group identifies the issue which needs dialogue and spends a designated time talking about the meaning of the issue.
- All participants follow the rules of dialogue:
 - 1 Suspend judgement
 - 2 Ask questions to clarify meaning
 - 3 Listen attentively
 - 4 Avoid jumping to conclusions
 - 5 Let the conversation take its own course
 - 6 Avoid getting into a debate or argument
 - 7 Be open to others' opinions.
- A defined conclusion may not be reached. The purpose of the technique is to enhance understanding and meaning which will later contribute to a better outcome or conclusion.



(Continued over)

Dialogue for meaning (cont)

Product

There is no published product from this technique but it does produce better informed individuals with heightened understanding about an issue.

Alternative process for large groups

- Divide the group into two.
- The first group sits in the circle as above.
- Each member of the second group is assigned the role of observer of a participant in the circle and makes note of their participation in the dialogue with regard to adherence to the rules of meaning making.
- After a period of dialogue, the observer provides private feedback to the participant.
- Roles are then reversed and the dialogue continues and feedback provided.

PrimaryConnections examples

- What do we understand about the term 'assessment processes' in the primary classroom?
- What do we understand about a particular science phenomenon?
- What do we mean by the term 'literacies of science'?
- What does 'scientific literacy' mean and how might we contribute to developing it in our students?
- What do we understand about the PrimaryConnections programme?
- What do we mean by 'cooperative learning strategies'?

Reference

Senge, Peter (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation*. New York: Doubleday.